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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07
LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 L-03 NSC-05
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 /083 W
----------142234Z 048972 /62
P R 142128Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8597
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 336

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT, ELAB, SP
SUBJECT: SUAREZ-OPPOSITION MEETING: THE BASQUE SCENE

REF: MADRID 241

1. DURING THE COURSE OF A JANUARY 13 MEETING IN MADRID BETWEEN IRVING BROWN (AFL-CIO REPRESENTATIVE IN EUROPE WHO HAS BEEN VISITING IN BARCELONA AND MADRID JANUARY 9 -13) --ACCOMPANIED BY LABATT--AND TWO TOP STV (SOLIDARITY OF BASQUE WORKERS-TRADITIONAL GROUP) LABOR LEADERS, THE LATTER RECOUNTED THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE JANUARY 10 SUAREZ-OPPOSITION MEETING (REFTEL) WITH RESPECT TO BASQUE INTEREST. THE STV TRADE UNIONISTS
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HAD BEEN BRIEFED THE EVENING BEFORE BY PNV (BASQUE NATIONALIST PARTY - THE BASQUE COMPONENT OF THE OPPOSITION CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC "TEAM"). LEADER JULIO JAUREGUI, ONE OF THE FOUR PARTICIPATING OPPOSITION LEADERS.

2. THE POLITICAL AMNESTY QUESTION HAD APPARENTLY BEEN RESOLVED TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE BASQUES. OF WHAT

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JAUREGUI ESTIMATED AS 200 BASQUE POLITICAL PRISONERS,
180 WERE TO BE RELEASED AND 20 WERE TO BE SENT INTO "EXILE"
(PERHAPS AN OUT-OF-AREA INTERNAL EXILE WITHIN SPAIN) FOR
A FEW YEARS. WEHN ASKED IF THE 200 INCLUDED THOSE ACCUSED
OF KILLINGS, THEY REPLIED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THEIR RATIONALE
APPARENTLY WAS THAT GOVT FORCES HAD ALSO DONE SOME KILLING
OF BASQUES OVER THE YEARS, AND THAT IT THEREFORE "BALANCED
OUT." THE GOVT, ACCORDING TO JUAREGUI, WAS WILLING TO NEGOTIATE
WITH ETA BUT NOT WITH SUCH OTHER TERRORIST GROUPS AS GRAPO OR FRAP.

3. WITH RESPECT TO THE FORM OF THE ELECTION LAW, SOME DEVICE
WOULD BE ADOPTED WHICH WOULD ASSURE BASQUES (NOT TO MENTION
CATALANS) OF A FAIR REGIONAL REPRESENTATION IN THE NEW PARLIA-
MENT. THIS WOULD BE MANAGED, HOWEVER, WITHOUT RESORTING TO
AN ELECTORAL SYSTEM WHICH WOULD RESULT IN A PARLIAMENT
CLUTTERED UP WITH AN EXCESS NUMBER OF SMALL, MARGINAL POLITICAL
PARTIES.

4. THE STV SPOKESMEN NOTED THAT ALL THE MAYORS OF THE BASQUE
PROVINCES HAD PLANNED TO GATHER IN NAVARRA ON JANUARY 16,
BUT THAT THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR HAD BEEN RELUCTANT TO
GRANT PERMISSION FOR SUCH A POTENTIALLY EXPLOSIVE EVENT.
HOWEVER, AS A RESULT OF THE MEETING WITH SUAREZ, IT HAD
BEEN PROPOSED THAT INTERIOR MINISTER MARTIN VILLA ATTEND A
"SUMMIT MEETING" OF BASQUE MAYORS IN VITORIA TO EXPLAIN THE
GOVT'S NEW BASQUE POLICY. SUBSEQUENTLY, THE EMBASSY LEARNED
THAT THIS PLAN WAS ALSO SCRATCHED, FOLLOWING AN URGENT
MEETING BETWEEN MARTIN VILLA AND THE BASQUE PROVINCE
GOVERNORS ON JANUARY 13. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS OF JANUARY
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14, MARTIN VILLA WAS NOW TO TRAVEL THAT SAME DAY TO THE
BASQUE REGION TO MEET SEPARATELY WITH GROUPS OF BASQUE MAYORS
IN PAMPLONA AND IN VITORIA.

5. THE VERSIONS WE HAVE FROM THE VARIOUS PARTICIPANTS
IN THE DIALOGUE WITH SUAREZ COINCIDE BROADLY THAT SOMETHING
CLOSE TO A TOTAL AMNESTY (AT LEAST FOR BASQUES) WILL BE
PROCLAIMED. IN THE REASONABLY NEAR FUTURE, BUT ORIOL'S REMAINING
IN THE HANDS OF THE GRAPO KIDNAPPERS OBVIOUSLY COMPLICATES THE
TIMING. THE FIGURE OF TWENTY PRISONERS TO BE EXILED GIVEN BY
JAUREGUI CORRESPONDS WITH THE NUMBER USUALLY GIVEN FOR HARD CORE
TERRORISTS CONVICTED OF DIRECT INVOLVEMENT IN ASSASSINATIONS.
VARIOUS FORMULAE HAD BEEN GIVEN FOR HANDLING THEM, INCLUDING
JAUREGUI'S IDEA OF EXILE (RESIDENCE IN A PART OF SPAIN
AWAY FROM THE BASQUE COUNTRY WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO HAVING
THEM LIVE NEXT DOOR IN THE FRENCH BASQUE REGION.)

6. THE TRADE OFF WOULD BE A DECISION BY THE ETA (OR MOST
OF ITS SPLINTERED COMPONENTS) TO GO OUT OF THE TERRORIST

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BUSINESS PERMANENTLY AND AN END TO THE RECRUDESCENT CLASHES BETWEEN NUMBERS OF BASQUE DEMONSTRATORS AND THE POLICE ON THE AMNESTY ISSUE. WITH RESPECT TO THE FIRST, WE UNDERSTAND FROM A SENIOR GOS OFFICIAL THAT SUB ROSA CONTACTS BETWEEN THE GOS AND THE ETA HAVE RESULTED IN SOMETHING LIKE A TACIT TRUCE WITH THE ETA, ALTHOUGH THIS MUST APPLY ONLY TO THE SO-CALLED "POLITICAL-MILITARY" WING. THE MORE INTRANSIGENT AND RADICAL "MILITARY" WING, WHICH WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE OCTOBER MURDER OF COUNCILOR OF THE REALM ARALUCE AND HIS BODYGUARDS (MADRID 7618), HAS CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR AN ATTEMPT THIS WEEK TO ASSASSINATE A BILBAO MAN CHARACTERIZED BY SOME AS A POLICE INFORMER.
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